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SUBJECT: VIEW FROM ZAMFARA DEPUTY GOVERNOR

Classified By: Ambassador John Campbell for Reasons 1.4 (b & d).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Zamfara State Deputy Governor Mahmud Aliyu Shinkafi, also the current ANPP gubernatorial candidate for Zamfara State, met with the Ambassador on February 5 at his Gusau residence. Shinkafi, speaking before State Commissioners and media, used the opportunity to highlight improvements made to the education, health, and agriculture sectors and showcased his Mahmud Foundation's efforts to provide micro-credit loans, technical training, and healthcare subsidies. Shinkafi opined about Zamfara State Governor Ahmed Sani Yerima's support for General Buhari's presidential campaign and discussed his own gubernatorial aspirations. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) Deputy Governor Shinkafi used the meeting to underscore the achievements made to the education, health, and agriculture sectors in Zamfara State. Shinkafi emphasized that through his personal initiative, the Mahmud Foundation, substantial gains had been made to the agriculture development of Zamfara State. By providing micro-credit loans to consortiums of farmers, Shinkafi claimed that he was aiding in employment creation, technical training, and sustainability and that the State's annual budget had committed significant funds to reforming land tenure and resource allocation. He solicited increased USG assistance in the cultivation of local crops, particularly kasava. Shinkafi added that he had privately subsidized treatment for 600 patients in Zamfara State. He dismissed criticism of the poor condition of Zamfara's roads, blaming the PDP for "locking Zamfara out from federal funds."

¶3. (C) When asked about Zamfara State Governor Ahmed Sani Yerima's recent pledge to campaign for ANPP presidential aspirant General Muhammadu Buhari in the North West, Shinkafi stated that "pressure was put on Yerima" to concede to Buhari's selection and that support for him, at this stage, was merely indicative of Buhari's popularity in Zamfara and his ability to win in the North overall. Riding the coattails of a Buhari victory, he added, couldn't hurt his own gubernatorial aspirations. Shinkafi claimed that he enjoys 100% popularity in the State, having been groomed and pushed forward by Governor Yerima. He also revealed that 500 former PDP Zamfara State elders decamped recently to the ANPP.

¶4. (C) COMMENT: Zamfara State, cleaved out of the larger Sokoto State in 1996 by General Sani Abacha, is considered one of the poorest states in the Nigerian Federation. Despite an estimated annual budget of 50 billion Naira, Zamfara State has few roads, schools, hospitals, or industries. Fewer than 2% of its estimated 3,000,000 residents can access potable water or the State's meager power supply. Over 80% of Zamfara residents rely on small-scale agriculture, though such a livelihood is greatly

limited and imperiled by desertification and mismanagement of resources.

¶5. (C) COMMENT CONT'D: Deputy Governor Mahmud Shinkafi appears confident and poised to assume the governorship in May, claiming support from both Governor Yerima and the general populace of Zamfara State. END COMMENT.  
CAMPBELL